

call from your cell phone.

- If strangers telephone or come to your door, don't admit that you are alone.
- If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night. Tell your landlord if security improvements are needed. Better lighting, stronger locks, night security guards — all are ways to make a building safer.
- Install a minimum 180 degree wide-angle eye viewer in your door.

When Driving or Riding. Rapes also happen in cars and other vehicles. Most take place in the rapist's car, so be very careful about accepting rides from strangers. A casual offer of a ride home from somebody you don't know — or know only slightly — could mean trouble. It's a good idea *never* to hitchhike.

Be especially cautious even when driving your own car. Reduce your risk by taking these precautions:

- *Always* lock your car.
- Check the back seat before you get in.
- Keep doors locked while you drive.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- If you think you are being followed, drive to a public place or a police station.
- If your car breaks down, open the hood or attach a white cloth to the car antenna. If someone stops to help, stay in your locked car and ask them to call the police or a garage.

What Should You Do If You're a Victim?

If you prefer not to call the police right away, get help from a friend, your doctor, or a hospital emergency room, or contact rape or

other crisis services that may be available in your community.

The most important thing to remember after an attack is that you should not touch anything, change your clothes, wash, or douche until you have contacted the police and been to the hospital. If you do, you may accidentally destroy valuable evidence that the police and prosecutor might need to arrest and convict your attacker.

The Child Victim

Each year more than 100,000 children suffer some type of sexual abuse. In many cases, the victim is female and the offender is male. Who is the typical offender? In over one-third of the sexual abuse cases involving children, the offender is known to the child and the child's family. In other words, the abuser is often a parent, relative, or close family friend. Because children are so trusting and defenseless, they are especially vulnerable to sexual assault.



How to Respond

Children often make up stories, but they rarely lie about being victims of sexual assault. If a child tells you about being touched or assaulted, take it seriously. Your response helps determine how the child will react to the abuse. Stay calm. Explain that you are concerned about what happened, but not angry with the child. Many children feel guilty, as if they had provoked the assault. Children need to be reassured that they are not to blame, and that they are right to tell you what happened.

Sometimes a child may be too frightened or confused to talk directly about the abuse. Be alert for any changes in behavior that might hint that the child has suffered a disturbing experience.

Mesa Police Department

Preventive Measures Against

RAPE

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- ▶ If you want more information on rape prevention, the facts about rape, or the kinds of programs that can help the rape victim, contact the Mesa Family Advocacy Center at 480-644-4075.

Mesa Police Department

www.mesaaz.gov/police



The Facts About Rape

The Victim

If you think that rape is motivated by sex, or happens because the victim asked for it, look at the facts.

Rape can happen to anyone — children, grandmothers, students, working women, mothers, wives, the rich and the poor.

The Situation

Perhaps you think that rape happens only in certain high-risk situations — hitchhiking, walking alone at night, going alone to bars. It's true that rapes can happen in these situations. But many rapes take place in ordinary, seemingly safe places. In fact, about one-third of all rapes occur in or near the victim's own home.

When the salesman knocked on the door, I let him in. He was friendly at first. Then, all of a sudden, he grabbed me.

I was downstairs in the laundry room of our apartment building. I'd been there alone many times. But this time...

I was walking to work in broad daylight. A car stopped next to me. The driver leaned over and asked for directions. When I got close to the car, he pulled out a gun and told me to get in.

The Rapist

Imagine a typical rapist. Whom do you picture? A sex-crazed man? A psychopath? More often than not, those stereotypes are wrong. Most rapists don't look peculiar or act strangely. But they may be less stable

and more aggressive than most people. They may dislike women. Mainly, they want to hurt, humiliate, and degrade another human being.

Rapists are not always strangers to their victims. In over one-third of reported cases, the rapist is an acquaintance, neighbor, friend, or relative.

Reduce Your Risk

What Should You Do To Prevent Rape?

Facing the facts about rape is the first step. You know that anyone can be the victim. So the next step is to learn how to prevent it from happening to you.

Remember these special preventive measures:

Outside. Most rapes occur outside, on the street, in a park, playground or schoolyard. Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you when you're outside...particularly if you're alone or it's dark. Try these tips:

- Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.
- Walk confidently, directly, at a steady pace. A rapist looks for someone who appears vulnerable.
- Walk on the side of the street facing traffic.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys where rapists can hide.
- Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement. Don't burden yourself with too many packages.
- If you think you are being followed, walk quickly to areas where there are lights and people. If a car appears to be following you, turn and walk in the opposite direction, or walk on the other side of the street.
- Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance, and never get too



close to the car.

- If you feel you are in danger, don't be reluctant to scream and run. Consider carrying a whistle or any type of noise-maker. And if you're in trouble, use it!
- If you are in trouble, attract help in any way you can. Scream, yell for help, yell "Fire!" or break a window in a house where you think someone is home.

At home. Many rapes occur in the victim's home, in a garage or an apartment laundry room. In some cases, the rapist may be a burglar who breaks into a house and unexpectedly finds someone home. In others, an attacker purposely looks for women home alone. So one of the best ways to prevent sexual assault is to protect your home:

- Make sure all doors are solid and sturdy. Entry doors should be solid core wood (at least 1-3/4 inches thick) or metal. Good locks, such as a deadbolt lock with a 1-inch throw, are a must. Don't rely on chain locks. An average-size man can easily break most chain locks.
- Have your locks changed or re-keyed when you move into a new house or apartment.
- If strangers ask to use your phone in an emergency, offer to make the call yourself. Ask them to wait outside while you make the call.
- Install good exterior lighting around your house or apartment building.
- Someone selling something or making repairs? Always check identification before opening your door. Ask that identification cards be slipped under your door for you to check. If you want to be certain, call the person's office. Any reputable sales agent or repairperson will be glad to let you check.
- If you come home and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Go to the nearest phone and call police or

